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of the "servant problem."*

DOMESTIC SERVICE

BY

AN OLD SERVANT

"A most moving and faithful record of a life devoted to the service of others . . . revealed in words that will live because of their truth and sincerity."—*From the introduction by Mrs. George Wemyss.*

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BY AN OLD SERVANT

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DOMESTIC SERVICE

We wandered away from parents and home
As soon as they gave the command,
With our duty before us. They told us to work
For the good of our dear native land.

Years pass very quickly, and now we retire,
And parents have long passed to rest.
The counsel they gave us, the work that they chose,
Was just what we now call the best.

M. S.



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R. Brown, Inverurie, Photo.

THE AUTHOR

DOMESTIC SERVICE

By AN OLD SERVANT

With a Preface

by MRS. GEORGE WEMYSS

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PREFACE

COUNTLESS servants have figured in works of fiction, and it is often the character of the servant that lives in our memories when the rest of the characters have faded away.

The relationship of master and man is one of the most appealing in fact as well as in fiction. Nothing of our childhood remains with us more vividly than the memory of the devotion shown to us by servants.

An officer, fighting in France—a member of a well-known and distinguished family—wrote home the day before he was killed, and sent his love to dear old M——, B——, G——, and W——; butler, groom, gardener, house-keeper, all friends of his childhood. As they had been with him then, so were they with him now—at his death—in spirit.

To him his home-coming had meant seeing them all again as part of his beloved home.

To them his death meant that the place could never again be the same, and through the short evenings of their lives it will be of that most gallant gentleman they will talk, and of that wonderful home-coming that never came.

That side of the picture has been shown over and over again.

The other side of the picture is now, we believe, presented to us for the first time in *Domestic Service*, a most moving and faithful record of a life devoted to the service of others.

The single-mindedness of the writer ; her appreciation of kindness ; her devotion to duty ; her grateful indebtedness to the " Domestic Servants' Benevolent Institution," which stood by her through all her years of service, are revealed in words that will live because of their truth and sincerity.

And of the many who will read her book the mistresses must say, " I wish I had been her mistress," and the servants must say, " I will try to be like her."

M. C. E. W.

INTRODUCTION

THIS book is written by an old servant who must speak of Domestic Service as it has been to her fifty-two years of her life. It matters very little if it is dry reading, and of no interest to a certain class of people, if only it is read and of some use to the young girls who would be leaving school to start life in the same way. And it is the earnest wish that good situations, year after year, will turn up for good deserving servants, so that all may work together in unity and for the good of all mankind. And will all readers remember that the old servant left school at the age of ten to work for herself in 1862.

Your obedient servant,

M. S.

DOMESTIC SERVICE

FIRST of all we must admit that we do not honour nor appreciate our good parents as we ought to. It must be very difficult to be good parents, as the children's dispositions are so very different, and we can see this better as we get older. And we have seen good parents in every station in life. The domestic servant can speak of her good parents, and it is a very good thing we know to remember the commandment with the promise, as their good advice helps us along very often, specially when we are away and just beginning to see a little of the world. We have also seen bad parents in every station in life, and can feel heart sorry for their children ; and we have seen them most lovable and gentle, -although brought up in rough homes. We have not met with very many orphans as domestic servants, and we fear that

in the future, specially after this distressing war, that there will be many orphan girls. When we think of all this, surely we must value our parents and our homes more than we have ever done, for what a blessing that alone is to us. And when the girls have the thoughtful mother that has learned her to work, she can almost do her little bit before ever she goes to domestic service. Some mothers have work planned for each girl to do for her as soon as they arrive home from school.

It is such a mistake, and mothers regret it always in after years, if they cannot help her at all when she is older and not so able to do so much.

Work is another great blessing, and it has been wisely arranged by our Divine Master that all His creatures should have a work to do of some kind. Some are weak and some are strong. Old and young, rich and poor, there is that work expected from us, and; how much happier we are when we are at our work.

We have often noticed the school children, and heard them telling each other what they mean to be when they grow big. One boy is

to be a doctor, another a sailor or a soldier, while one wants to be a farmer. The same story is heard amongst the girls : one is to be a cook, another a nurse, and so on, and some will end the story by saying that her mother knows best what to put her to do. Now this shows us older people that there is the something even in the young children that tells them that they have to work, and are we not very stupid indeed when we will not try to do our best to help them to make a start. There are so many things to learn, so many different kinds of work that must be done to make the world go on right. And some work is easier than others ; but all ought to be well done, and in a cheerful, contented manner. Some prefer working with hands and feet ; they say it is easier than the head work ; but surely both are heavy work, for it does depend on your ability.

Boys and girls do not leave school so early as they did fifty or sixty years ago. The boys went out quite happy and manly to do their herding at some farm, and would be very useful for some years till they preferred learning some

trade, etc. ; then a younger boy just filled his place ; and by doing this they did learn farming a good bit, and this helped them on in after years if they wanted to go back to farming again. We regret to see that the page-boy is not wanted so much as he used to be : and what a help that used to be for a young boy. He learns a great deal by being first of all a while in the stable-yard or garage before he goes into the gentleman's house, and he is neat and tidy at all times for messages. We have seen many of them in our young days, and even the waif has been picked up by a good master and began in the stables and worked his way up to be a respected valet in the same household, and often and often told the story of his waif life in the servants' hall.

The writer began domestic service at the age of ten, and at a small croft. Her master was house-carpenter in the same family where her father was gardener, and her mistress could learn a young girl to be very clean and tidy, just as she had learned at home ; but she was very green for a good while, but by-and-by she could help her mistress with anything, and

so was of some use to her after a bit. Her wages were one pound a year, and that was encouragement to her. She got her first ten shillings when there the six months, and even now it is like a dream, for she remembers running home with the money and giving it as a present to her mother ; she did not think what her parents had paid for her for boots alone that six months, we only know that her earnings did not pay the shoemaker. Boots were dear at that time, but they lasted a good while. She always left home in tears, and began service very down-hearted and homesick. We can pity any one like that, for naturally they cannot help it ; it would be well for such if they could be more hardy at parting.

The parting has always been the same for her all her life, although she was told that she could master that if she tried. Well, the years pass on and she goes as nurse to two farms, but do not stay long at either, and she was a while in the poultry-yard at home. Wages was rising and she was also learning, and when the short winter days came she was not wanted after dark at this poultry-yard, so the extra

hours had to be put in at the granite mansion in the scullery on her way home—it is wonderful how she learns there. All the girls had helped to teach her, and the English cook was spotlessly clean, a sharp but good kind soul, and one who was a life-long friend to all the gardener's girls ; her memory is still dear to them and her clean ways in the kitchen we cannot forget. She had leave to give away the pieces of broken meat or bread, etc., and her way was to gather all the clean and put it into a jar with a lid ; other pieces were good, but soiled with gravy—this she gave away to the first beggar at the door, but it had to be clean. The letter woman and the fish woman and another woman who did footmen's washing—a widow—they all had many nice pieces, and there was often broth made for poor people. Some came four miles or more for this weekly broth. Amongst the first of her work in service was making bread-crumbs, standing on a stool in this same kitchen when quite a little girl, going a message, which she often did before she was sent out to her first situation, the Croft.

The ways of the granite house could never

be forgotten, for no waste was ever allowed, and somehow the girls did attend to what was said to them, and we often saw them out, and we were brought up to respect them; and some of the highest and best of the nobility would be seen in the north beside us, specially in the summer-time or at the shooting. The writer learned a great deal in the mansion at home. The ladies and housekeeper were so careful of all the pieces of valuable old linen, chintz, curtains and carpets, and they came in so useful for poor people, and they were renewed every year, and the old was good and lasted a long time in a poor home. We can remember, too, when the older ladies left and a new mistress came, one who was more beloved than ever. It was then the poultry-yard was started, and the writer did learn a great deal—and we were fortunate with the white fowls, geese, guinea fowls, etc., and reared a good many every year. It is well to learn all we can in every department, for it comes useful to you if ever you are an housekeeper.

The servants' bedrooms were always nice, as the curtains, bed-covers, valances, etc., were

made of new patchwork and with good lining and fringe to match. This work was done by the housekeeper and girls in the winter months, and they lasted a long time, as they were well done. Of course the laundry-maids were there, and also a dairymaid all the year round, and there was a lot of work to do. We do not think that ever there could be better days in service again, and we have often said that were we young and could go back we would gladly serve the same lady and gentleman again, for each did their own in a very simple but methodical way and no fuss. The orders were well given and carefully obeyed, but all servants are not the same, and now we go further away.

Before going away the writer is sent to the Episcopal School, but only for a short time. A good situation is open, and she is wanted to fill it. This is very disappointing as she wants to stay at school, but the gardener prefers service for his girls; but if the place is not suitable she may come back to school. But that was not to be, and the situation was one of the best in the land, and she remained there

a long time. The work was hard for one so young, but she was treated like one of the family, and was very often out with them. The dear old master must still be remembered by many, for he was a widower and was kind to all. The old servant likes to tell the story about the Scotch broth that she was told to make for the second dinner, the master being fond of this broth ; but she forgot to put in her barley, and it was not found out till the last minute, so there was such a commotion. What could be done ? The young ladies never scolded, but they were in tears, and so had to tell their father, who said, “ Oh, don't trouble about that ; she can't help it now. Tell her to make it curry soup.” This was done, and with some nice rice which was ready the great trouble was soon over and the good master enjoyed his dinner. Kind messages were sent to the young cook, and we do not hear that she forgot her barley again.

We believe that if our employers used kind words instead of the bluster and scolding remarks, surely the servant would feel it more, and so notice her work better, for we have

heard of some severe punishments some have had for a mere trifle, and surely a servant is upset enough, and if she is worth the name of a servant she will not repeat mistakes every day. Our master lived a beautiful life and took great interest in us girls, and made us read at family worship and gave us many a good advice and never forgot to pray for his servants; and when his last day on earth came he had a peaceful end. Strange to say, he read the 39th Psalm that morning—one of our Burial Service Psalms—and went out to speak to some invalids at an asylum where he sometimes went, and sat down in a chair in the office and expired. He was taken home at ten o'clock, and he only went out at nine, so we shed the bitter tear; but he was one of the best of men, and left behind him one of the loveliest characters and examples we could ever see.

And now we turn away to another larger house with plenty of work to do, but more servants, a season place only, but we were very bright and peaceful fellow-servants. We find it rather a difficult job to please our employers, for we were strange, but after a bit we got on

better ; they had a sharp way of speaking to us, and so we did not think we could serve them. The housekeeper and head housemaid were old servants and very nice, and they told us to cheer up and we would like the family better, and so we did ; for we all had an illness, and it was supposed that the water was bad, and two doctors were called in and our lady who used to speak sharp to us was seen in tears. However, as time went on we all got better, and we often drove with them in the large bus to Church, and we were sorry to leave them when the season was up and they were going abroad, so you see the faults are often our own when we begin to judge our fellow-men too often or too soon.

Our young master came of age, and we had some very large parties. The chef and all the menservants and housekeeper and ladies'-maids, and the other servants had to practise dancing every night, as we all had to be present at the servants' ball that was on the third night. The first was the gentry's ball, then the tenants' ball, and ours last ; so most of us were tired, but we had a very nice time and we found the

family as jolly at our party as they were at the first two. Our lady sent the maids to dress us and gave us laces and ribbons and also gloves, etc., so that we were all well dressed for the occasion, and one of the laundry-maids did not care to join us and our lady missed her and asked for her. So you see, after all, she was a better mistress than we thought ; and when the time came for us to leave we were told by our housekeeper that her ladyship had written for us, so that we might all get good places ; and we were each presented with a new dress, and we were very sorry to part with the servants, for we had been nine months there and were happy.

The writer while there was three times almost killed on the railway ; we would walk on the line and we would not see danger. Of course we had few trains, but we had engines ; and once the engine had no chance to whistle and so was only a short space away ; it was a careless way, but we did it because it took us home sooner. We would not be allowed to do the same again, and we wonder at our stupid heedless ways when we are young.

Very little more can be written about this family, only that we hear of all their troubles and can feel for them, knowing them so well when they were young, and we are in touch with one of the old servants yet. The master and mistress have gone to their rest some time ago. But families do not know where the old servant may see them twenty or thirty years after. But some may say that they do not care what does become of you after they are done with you. This may be true of some, but why have we such cruel remarks to make, and even if we are right about a few we are wrong in raising up such unkind ideas of many others, for they do take an interest in the servants who are a long time beside them, and many an employer is much upset by having new servants beside invalids or with their children.

We will now move on to another large house, and there, too, we have the same old story, for we were in a good situation again ; and there we had eight or ten children, and we look back with affection, for some of the dear ones are in the early grave long ago, and yet we can remember

the nursery and schoolroom well, for many a nice homely romp the old servant had. The wet days had to be idle days for us, for we had to play at hide and seek, and work had to be done too, but it was no use trying to push the children on one side ; if they wanted us we had to go, and of course we had to work up for the hour we were behind so long as it was known why we were late—but another servant would attend to any special duty for you. We have found young girls very good in this way, and would run to look if you had been at your post, specially if they had seen you go out, and one would ask the other if they had seen you come in. Of course we cannot say that all the servants are kind alike, but the writer could count up all the bad fellow-servants she has ever had ; but it depends a lot on the class that you live with. We cannot feel at home amongst a certain class, and we have left situations where unruly upper servants get too much their own way ; some may be very good servants for the family and for the house, and yet abuse the under maids. We can look back on one or two who would not let you out, not

even to buy boots or other necessities, and when you asked leave of absence the answer was, "No, no," and a rush is made to give you something to do ; and in those days there was not the fortnight's holidays that the girls get now.

The old sèrvant has seen many changes, and in many cases prefers the good old ways ; there may be some better arrangements made, we cannot doubt that, but we are surprised at good old practices that our late beloved employers had, ignored by their own children after they have so far grown up. Servants need the good example from their superiors, and when they hear the world speak well of them they do look for the good ways in the home life. We all like to hold up an employer's good name, surely we do if we are interested at all in our work, and if we feel that we cannot do our duty to them we ought to go elsewhere and not deceive them. We are trusted with a very great deal, and it is well for us if we are doing all we can as faithful servants, and in the end lay down our tools with the feeling that we have tried to do our best.

Now we often say that we do our best, and when we don't please we are apt to be very disheartened ; we look too much for man's praise ; if we could only try and see our failings and pick them out for ourselves we are sure that we should have little to say about our best, and call ourselves, after all, the unprofitable servants. There is danger in being too vain, and thinking we are far better than our neighbour : we are a better servant, we are a better cook, we can do our work quicker. So-and-so is very slow, and many other faults that we can see, and we may be quite right ; but what is good in them may not be in us at all. It is so difficult to live as we ought to live, and when we begin to be upper servants we need to show the younger servants the better example.

When in large houses we have often felt sorry for a new-comer, specially an under maid-servant—she comes quite the stranger, all eyes are on her, and if she arrives at meal-time all must see her and pass their opinion, and when she has been there a week or two she may be a favourite, and they all tell her what their first impressions were—some would be right

and some very far wrong. We know a cook who took a great dislike to a new girl as soon as she was told that she was Scotch. She was a fine old body, an Irishwoman ; she was an old servant there, and had a Scotch kitchen-maid who had been very rude to her at some time, so she thought Scotch girls were all alike, and so she was very stiff and not very friendly with her for more than a year. After that time she was not very well, for she was old, and this girl would do little things for her, specially carrying anything upstairs ; and by-and-by she told her why she had felt so cold toward her, and she was very sorry that she had been so, and for so long, and then added, " For you have been as kind as any daughter to me." They were the only two servants left in the London house one Sunday afternoon, and the poor old body felt giddy and fell on the kitchen floor ; but the Scotch girl was with her and did what she could to make her comfortable on the floor. There were three ladies in the house and one was ill ; her bell rang and the girl ran to answer it. The front door bell rang, but she must go to the

invalid lady first and attend to her for a minute. By this time the front door bell had rung three times ; and when she answered it the visitors were not very well pleased, nor were the other two ladies, but the girl said nothing when remarks were made.

By-and-by the other servants came in and advised that the doctor should be sent for, but the old cook said, “ Wait till the morning, as if her ladyship sees him coming in it will upset her,” and she was very old ; so we were all quiet till Monday, when we got in the doctor, and we had to tell the aged mistress, and the poor old servant had to go away for good. It was a sight to see the parting of the two ; we cannot tell who felt it most, and we all missed the cook, who had been there so long, for she was likeable and tried to make us comfortable—and in less than two years two ladies died in that house. One lady asked if cook was ill when the bells rang, and all were glad that she was not left, and said that she had done wisely by not telling why she did not answer the bells at once ; so we know that ladies do care for old servants.

But we had far more trouble to face after,

for one lady had in two nurses. The illness could not have been any worse we say, for it was a most painful case, and we all had extra work to do, and the house had to be kept very quiet. These ladies were so good to us young girls, and a whole book could be easily written were we to tell all we can remember. All the upper servants were old, and the coachman, horses, and carriage were very old. We are told that one of the servants is alive yet, and is over ninety years of age, and likely would not remember the writer of this book.

While in this family we were very often out sight-seeing, and Hyde Park was one of our favourite places ; we were sure to see some one we knew, some one's carriage and nice horses ; and when we saw our own, or if our ladies saw us, we heard of it when we came in. We enjoyed going out for the short time.

After much suffering this lady died, and her death has left a lasting impression. The servants had to sing to her, and we found that a very trying duty to do when you are asked to do it. We will ever remember singing, " All hail the power of Jesu's Name " and " For ever

with the Lord.” The nurses and us girls were often in tears going out and into her room, and once she told the writer that she must not cry for her, as she was only thankful that this illness had been sent, for it had made her think of the Good Shepherd, but for that she would never have come to Him. Her dying advice is dear to us still, and we trust to meet her again by-and-by. As we write about dear ladies we have lost for thirty years and more the sweet memories rise, and we feel that we are with them again. Her housemaid was nicknamed “Mousie,” as she often lighted her fire, and did it while she was asleep ; this she considered so clever, and at night she wanted to say good night to her (Mousie), and by the time she came she would be too ill to speak to her, so nurse was told to lay the servant’s hand on her’s—so it had to be done.

Time passes on, and death takes her away home. We would like to mention more, but her aged aunt died very soon after, and all the servants had to say good-bye. Our mistress kissed our hand and thanked us for all we had done for her, and we had to watch her in turns

to relieve the ladies and nurses, so the writer was hid at the bedside, a slit being made in the bed-curtain so that she might be there and yet not seen, and if her ladyship wanted any one, she could see and at once fetch assistance. She wanted at times to be alone, and we all knew what that meant, for she always remembered her devotions ; and you may guess how the writer felt when she heard her name called out and a good long prayer for her. Surely that would melt the hardest heart there is, to hear your dying mistress pleading for you ; who could not love her and every member of her family ? We went and saw her also laid in the tomb, and we were in tears all the way home, as we had to look for other situations. We have had so much of this, and strange to say the old coachman died a few minutes after her ladyship. The good-bye a short time before was followed by a shock. We saw the dying and good old coachman ; he was so fond of his horses.

And now for the present we will leave sad stories and change to another subject. We have said a good deal about the aged, and we

will say a little about the children now, for we have spent a good many lively hours with them. The head nurse, as a rule, is one that we have been able to look up to, for she has to be a good, thoughtful, and kind woman. We have met with many in our time, and we are sure that what she says is right, and we know if we may speak to the children or not. We will never forget the dear little boy who used to come and beg with the writer to come and play with them. "Do come and bring your basket and say, 'Yer nae weel; your a poor woman, and your very hungry.'"

We mention this as we fear the grown-up "dear little boy" may be now at the front fighting for us, for we lose our dear little children; they do grow up so fast, and we do know that they like to be remembered by us in after-years.

We lost one dear wee boy at one of the farms where we lived in our early service days, and we often said that we preferred the house when there were children running about, and we have often had long walks outside with them, romping on the roadside, and that has often cheered the young servant who at times may

not have very much to brighten her life, and far away from home too. When you have watched the children grow up, surely they are dear to you all their days ; some may forget you, for the dispositions are not all the same. The old servant does take a warm interest in them, and so is pleased to hear of their well-being ; and no one feels it more than we do when one or more is called away in the prime of life. We can tell of many such sad cases, for the cruel *Lusitania* victim is not the only one, and we can but sympathize with parents and aged mothers in their deep sorrow. The world was never more full of sorrow than it has been during this distressing war, and with it all we must not lose heart, for we are sure of the overruling Providence, and even if man has so much his own way now we know that he will only be able to go so far. The sinking of that vessel gave many aching hearts, and we did feel for relatives known to us who had to humbly say, " Thy will be done," and the dear one had to be left in the ocean. We think of those who have been kind to us in every station, and when we look back on many years of

unity it makes us feel all the happier even if sad.

We hope the young domestic servant will not look on all this book as being very sad, for there has been the very happy bright days as well as the sad ones, and one does long remember those who have been such good friends to them, and the loss is very great. We have not lost any fellow-servants in any of the houses we have lived in, and only one case of insanity. We have only been in England and in Scotland, and we find very little difference in both places. We were amongst superior servants from the very first, and we have had plenty of work in most houses. We remember the lady's-maid at home, she was always so neatly dressed and looked so well in her plain bonnet. She once told a friend how poor they had been at home before she began service ; she could only get one cotton dress, and it was done up for her on Saturday night, ready to wear clean on Sunday morning. She had a hard struggle to get on, but she had been fortunate and many ladies and servants had helped her, so she was our beloved-lady's maid, and when we had to

part with her, after she had been with us only a short time, it was a very sad experience, the maid went from there to Her Majesty Queen Victoria's household till she was married, and we heard good of her for many years, as she had a very good home in London. So, girls, do not get discouraged. Should you be obliged to start poor, you are sure to get on if you have the blessing of health, and do not forget to write home and honour your parents by being kind and good to them ; but should you have no parents or home be sure and honour those who have brought you up so that you can work for yourself ; and if you try domestic service we wish you every success, and by doing well you are sure to have a good friend before you are very old that will help you.

The cook has a very trying place and has a good many to please in a large house. You may want to try cooking, so you begin in the scullery ; it is very hard work, for the kitchens in large houses are very busy places and even worse if you have no stillroom ; but if you learn from the very beginning you will get on best,

and when you can do your game, vegetables, etc., and coppers, etc., well, the cook will, if a good woman, very soon take you in the kitchen beside her, to learn more, till you are able to be the first kitchen-maid. That is a good rise, for then you can cook luncheon and manage to go a week-end with your lady and gentleman should she not be wanted. Often this has been done when the cook-housekeeper has the nursery and the schoolroom at home, and you will be trusted by the cook as she knows what you can do and sees that you are careful and so not wasteful. We old servants hope that waste is now a thing of the past, for surely every one now will be more and more careful. Surely the waste will be stopped now, for we have seen waste on the top of waste in some of our best situations. We have been surprised at the careless way that servants' meals have been sent in to the servants' hall: a lovely roast of beef would be at one end of the table—alas! raw inside and burned black outside; so we try the Irish stew at the other end of the table, and that is singed and burned too, and yet there were four in the kitchen.

Now this perhaps should not be exposed, but in such cases the servants have to eat what cannot strengthen them or go without ; but we have to take a good many such dinners or suppers if we have no lady in the house. Of course we did not run and tell a gentleman, but had we a lady, a mistress, we could have had things altered, and not let the pigs have our roast. We have seen waste on the top of waste and could not interfere ; but this we trust cannot be the case again, for master and servant have been brought face to face with this awful war, and so we look for better times when we cannot again tell out such a true story. A large house misses a lady, as we cannot get on so well without her if we try ever so. And we have seen laundry-maids done away with and linen and servants' clothes sent out. Servants should cry out if their clothes are lost or destroyed, as we have seen them damaged, for the cotton dresses, aprons, etc., are expensive, and they should tell the lady or housekeeper about this, as they will soon see damage enough in the linen press when servants have their's ruined, and we never saw the lady

that would let that go on. A gentleman is not always at home, and even if he was for a few days one cannot run to him with every worry. The housekeeper has not always the easy mind, for there is a lot in a large house to look after ; there is moth, mice, rats, damp, etc., to watch, and she must have a good head housemaid as a good friend to the house and herself—one who can help her—and pleasant is some of the old servants' memories of the upper housemaids. Some have married another fellow-servant, and so there is the hearty welcome for the old housekeeper whenever she finds it convenient to go in, and she feels happiest with the servants she has lived with so long.

The upper housemaid is an important servant, and much is expected from her, for she has nearly the whole house under her eye. She is constantly looking round and generally the first to see something wrong. She is wise if she is an early riser, firm but kind to her girls, learning them to be willing, obliging, clean and tidy. Surely if the girls see her in the early morning neat and active, with her clean cap and tidy head and feet, they must be slow to

learn if they are to be seen with a rough head and no cap, regardless of who they may meet before breakfast. The old servant has seen girls very untidy the early part of the morning, and working at the front door or about the front hall, and to their great surprise some of the gentlemen have come down. The girls could not hide, and so they were seen, and felt in disgrace, which they did not like ; then they would be tidy for a day or two, then begin the careless way again, and it does lower you, too, among your other fellow-servants.

Some housemaids have a great deal to do in the early morning ; but we believe it is not so heavy as it was fifty years ago ; there is not so much bath water to carry for one thing—the large baths are in use now. The girls found this very hard work at one time, and the carrying coals was also heavy in large houses, as more fires had to be lighted in dressing-rooms, specially in the shooting season. One order was given for the housemaid to have a good fire when they came in from shooting, and it was done and the stove over-heated. The lady was furious (in her fright), and the

gentleman, the eldest son, came in, and soon took all the blame as he gave the order himself. The housemaids never forget this, as every one is not so noble, but no harm was done ; but the housemaid might have lost her place had the son been angry too, but he was good to the servants, and so were the young ladies when they could help us in any way.

The writer has been a laundry-maid, and liked it very much, and we hope young girls will learn to do that work well. There are a few fine old hands retiring to make room for them, so you must have the proper training to be good at it like them. Do not think that it is easy work, and that you know all about it, just start at the very lowest place and you will have far more knowledge of the work. We remember being at it a long time before we were trusted to iron a white shirt. Our laundry days were shortened owing to ill-health, but the years spent in it were really happy days ; but you see it was at the girl's home, and she was only twenty years old when she began. Our master went to Wales and had seen nice large thick red serge cloaks with hoods and

brought home two for his laundry-maids and two black ones the same, one was for the dairy-maid, the other for the letter woman, Letter Betty, a fine old friend, who had carried letters for years. These cloaks were in place of shawls, for the family always gave them something to wear when outside exposed to the weather ; they lasted a long time. The housemaids had bed aprons, and every one had prayer aprons, each marked for its owner, sheets, pillow-cases, towels also, so when they came to the laundry to be done up the under laundry-maid took them to their proper owner at the end of the week. This was a great save to the house-keeper and head housemaid, and work was done orderly by us.

We had to keep the London house going as well, so when the family was in London large boxes were sent by water, and we would go to the station to look for our work and order the cart on our way home if boxes were come ; then came the very early morning start, for we had to send them off at a certain time, no matter if they were days late from the London boat ; but we were young and so we had to

hurry up, and we had the rest after. And then we had a class in the Sunday School at that time and the head housemaid was our teacher at home, for she often gave us Scripture questions, but one learns more often when they start to learn children. We had to try to answer her questions. She was a very nice person.

Our dairymaids were farmers' daughters generally, for they had good experience. There were twelve fine black cows close to the house, so it was no trouble to put them out into their park, and they were milked three times a day. Butter was always churned every morning for the dining-room breakfast. Cheese were made and sold at times with the butter which was quickly bought up. The milk was plentiful, and not as we see it now, very dear, and scarce, and much was given away to poor families near by.

We very soon miss the dairymaid when she has to be sent away, for she is such a help for stillroom-maid, kitchen and housemaids, and besides the work one had her for company, and we nearly always liked to visit her castle

as we called it. The old servant learned here to milk a cow before ever she left school, and afterwards, when in the laundry, the dairy-maid could go out for the day, and she could manage with the second housemaid to milk all the cows, that was eighteen for each of us to do that day, the twelve three times. Of course there was some one present, one of the cattlemen, to look after us. So you see it is very useful for young girls to learn when they are young.

We look back and think on many superior fellow-servants, and many whom we would like to meet again. Our young girls will not always find life smooth; we had our many trials, for some servants were quarrelsome and of a jealous nature, and it is very difficult to live with them. They often have more than you have, but the world is very large, and we find plenty of room in it for us all, and we can always say that the "world can never give the bliss for which we sigh," and so we need not be so afraid that our neighbour has our share too.

The years pass on, and we go to London, and we are not so happy there for a while.

We have to get used to different ways. We remember money was laid in chairs and under rugs to see if we were honest, and we did not see it for a time ; but were we to have the same again we would not trouble to give it up, it would more likely be left on the floor, where we saw it—for we cannot say much for the mistress who does such a mean action. But we have said that the family might have had dishonest servants at one time, and so tried the trap to see who they had ; and when we spoke of it to the other servants, we were advised to take no notice, so it was stopped after a time, as we laid all the cash into a china dish with a cover on it, and no one ever asked us where it came from : a half-sovereign was the highest, but we saw many a sixpence in a safe corner. Thanks only to the God of grace, we were under His care, and so we were perhaps as honest as they were. We think London a fine place, but you meet with many employers who will drag you down low enough if left to yourself. Now we do like best to show respect to our superiors if they are our employers, but if they have no respect for

themselves, what can we do ? We value most those who honour our merciful Creator by showing us the good example, but apart from that we are far better to leave than to risk serving such people. We had a situation once, but only for a few weeks. All went on fair for a fortnight, but we saw the footman at the front door at twelve forty-five one night looking for a cab to take him away. We heard in the early morning that our master sent him off at once because he had seen him smoking outside the back door ; but he had taken no notice of it till bed-time, and by that time he was more like a lunatic, so was hardly responsible for his words or deeds, and a poor example for his footmen, and the lad was only thankful to get away without his wages. The writer often wonders what became of his wife, as we liked her very much, as she told us some of her troubles ; and the old servant could hardly get away, for all the servants wanted to go. He was all right in the forenoon, but how could he be well after luncheon, and he died soon after we left.

It was after leaving this situation that we

had our first thoughts about writing a book. No one could believe all, were it written, and before we left we had a worse experience than the footman had because we obeyed the lady's orders and not the master's. We will leave off writing any more, only one of the servants was bad used because she had a Bible in her room ; he saw it and he was sure that she wasted his gas. That could not be as he turned out the gas at any time in case we read this Bible. We know there are few places like this, and well for us, for we could never live. And yet we ought to have a turn in one to make us more thankful when we get settled in a good place. We also feel more thankful surely for the grace of God given at such a time, for the writer used to cry and think to herself that it was little use trying to do well, for people would not let you. Now that we are older we can see better how we have been guarded and guided by our great and good Shepherd, and we had no character, for my employer did all he could to keep us out of a place by keeping back our letters at the front door, but one came from the Secretary at the Servants' Benevolent Institution in Piccadilly,

and so the writer was once more settled in a good situation, so we will say a few words about this Institution as we have already spoken of the good situation.

This Servants' Benevolent Institution was first started by a few servants in 1846, and was supported by them until it became better known, and by-and-by Her Majesty the late lamented Queen Victoria and Prince Consort took a very warm interest in it at once when told of it. And we have Prince Consort's kind and grateful remark when he said, "Who would not feel interested in domestic servants? They are with us when we are born, and the last to attend to us when we leave this world." The writer has not given the words as they were spoken, having lost the copy, but the exact meaning is given, and a copy can be seen by calling at 199, Piccadilly, and any other information given to any reader, as all member servants can never be too grateful to Her Majesty for being our Patroness so long, and we are now indebted to Her Majesty Alexandra, Queen Mother, for filling the vacant place, and by this we have other kind members of the Royal Family

assisting year after year, and money and votes have been given for years and a good work done for destitute and deserving old servants.

We can never speak too highly of this Institution, nor say too much about our much-respected secretary. The writer has been a member there ever since 1876, and has known him the thirty-nine years as a very active hard worker for us. He has spent his whole life nearly for our sakes, and we do believe his reward will be great from his Heavenly Master in the end, for there is so little that servants can do in return for what is done for them. The writer remembers well the first call at her Institution. After a short talk the secretary tapped her on the shoulder and looked at his two clerks which were there and said, "Mind, we must look after this woman," and so they did, for we have been in touch with the secretary ever since. Now the old servants are grateful, very grateful, when they get their pension, and thousands have been collected and given to them, and some are very destitute and have temporary relief. They collect votes every year, and the highest number wins, and

the more fortunate members give away votes every year, while they are in service. Much has been done even by poor families by keeping an infirm servant and giving her light work and a home which they could hardly afford, but she had been with them many years and so they make a sacrifice for her till she gets her pension from here. We must always bear in mind that it is a Benevolent Institution. We regret that we are too late to thank some of our good and generous nobility and gentry for what they have done, but they have been called away from us and we mourn the great loss ; we know they were God's people, for actions show the inward character, and so we are sure that great is their reward from their Heavenly Master when they tried to do His work, and surrounded as many were by temptations. Servants' ears are not closed, they can hear the jeer given to the rich man when he opens his purse and for his Redeemer's sake, and we heard the nickname ; but the servant can love a good master even if he is not very good himself, and unkind remarks hurt him even more than his master. This reminds the

writer of an early situation where the good master used part of our Litany at family worship, specially on Sunday, and all her life she has remembered him every time she hears the Litany ; so the rich man does his work many a time with little fuss.

The writer has tried all her life not to show partiality, and honours the good poor, for she knows a great many and many hard-working men and their good families, and she knows for herself that there are good Christian people to be found in many a very poor home, happy and singing their Psalm, for they have the good sense to know that One is Our Father and that we are all dear to Him. We must remember that each one is born in his station in life, wisely arranged by " One Who knows and Who is our Supreme Ruler." No one can alter this nor say to Him, " What doest Thou ? " so we must each and all keep our station and honour the rich man and the poor man who humbly tries to live a Christian life, and when their faults are seen by us may we at once turn to ourselves and look if we are not human, too, and may be as vile as they.

We often remember poor old Sally, who was so fond of the school children, she would run to meet them across a field with a biscuit, and if the little girl was hungry, how pleased she would be ; but when they went to see her they were rude to her, by telling her of her untidy house, and with a small croft Sally must have had too much to do. But the girls have never forgotten her kindness to them ; she had many a kind word, and we can hear her speaking to us now even in our old age, " Guid grant you grace, my lamb." It was nice to be Sally's lamb—" when we were hungry." And now dearer is she to us, and only gone home before. We missed her for years. And when we went to service Sally never forgot to ask about us, and we see the parting day yet, for it was one of our worst, but we see clearer now and we hope to meet again by-and-by. Sally's prayer has been answered a thousand times, and several of her school children speak of her when they meet, and so the poor woman did her work, too, for her Heavenly Master.

Grace has been given which alone can help us to work for our superiors, and for one another

serving in the same house. Parents must often find the children little gossips, for they do notice all they see, and we know this by ourselves when we were little. We remember one Sunday, when we came home from church, the writer had seen some one with a new muff and boa, and began her story to her sisters, and went on saying that she dare say they are not paid for. Her father was listening and heard all and called her and said, " Was that the text that she was telling ? Will you tell it now to your mother ? " She had to go up to them in disgrace, for she did not mean her father to hear her gossip ; but as this is so far back and so is like a dream we cannot tell if she remembered the text, and we think that she had to be reminded of it, and she also mocked her grandmother, and told her how she walked. Her father made her read the story of the children who mocked Elisha (2 Kings, chap. ii.). Another time she had been telling lies and her father made her read the story of Ananias and Sapphira his wife (Acts, chap. v.). This at different times had to be read to her sisters, and it must have been a great drop to her

to have this to do, and we are sure she was ashamed. Now we are sure that the gardener had many more times to check the gossip and lies, etc., but it is certain that this is best remembered, and we know that no one sermon, etc., was ever heard better by me, and that has done her more good than her father's advice. She told him tales and ran to meet him at night, giving him the news of the day. We remember as if a dream when some one called to see her mother. After she left the girl said she was glad that woman was gone. Her mother scolded her and then told her that she was the one who her grandmother wanted her father to marry, and that she might have been her mother, and she had amused a good many people by saying, "That she would not like that woman for a mother," and when the time came to meet her father he was told every word, and how glad she was that she was not her mother. Telling tales is also a bad habit, and many domestic servants are blamed for this, but we are inclined to think that there are very few ladies or gentlemen who will thank a servant for them unless it is something that

they have a right to know, then it is not a tale ; it is duty, because it may then be put right at once.

Many a time have we seen the nobility upset because the upper servants were quarrelling, and by remarks then made we knew that they did not like the unpleasantness. We notice this when we are the under-servant, and so we are more cautious, for they do not like tales, and a very good lady or housekeeper can soon read who is most to blame by the way the stories are told, for some can be so very spiteful to get you sent away ; but as a rule the under-servants are not kept if quarrelsome. We once lived with a lady in Norfolk who stopped quarrelling at once, and others as well as her, for they saw where the fault was and knew what to do. This good lady's motto was, " Unity is strength," and we never thought of quarrelling, for all were, or had to be, quiet, and get on with our work, for we had over twenty in the dining-room besides children, and yet we got out as we often had picnics for the children and young people on the lawn. We say there can never be happier days in

service, but we do hope the good old days will return, and even better days, and good girls come and go, giving credit and honour to their parents in days to come, for we know that there is just as good fish in the sea now as has ever been caught—good people in every station, all willing to work if only we could see the end of this distressing war.

The writer has been in service fifty-two years, as already told, and in nineteen situations—nine in Scotland and ten in England. One master in both countries has sworn at her—that is all, and not a bad record at all. The eldest son in Scotland apologized and said his father was far from well, but the gentleman in England swore every day and so we had to leave him. It is very difficult to be a housemaid, to do your work well and never be seen, and gentlemen fifty years ago did not care to see her often. We have heard that our late beloved master at home had been very thoughtful if he saw a young servant carrying a heavy scuttle of coal, or his old housemaid; he ran and took it upstairs for her; and just the sort of thing that he would do, and notice, too, if

any of his employees looked tired or not looking so well as usual. Servants often have to change when only season places are going ; the worst change of all is when the master or mistress is taken away, and the writer has been in several large houses where death has been the means of many and great changes, and when we see the servants leaving the good home we must feel for them ; but only two of all the nineteen can be bad records, for we would stop servants from going there at all if we knew them, for they take your character from you and prevent you from getting another just to try to make you stop with them. There are some families who are very nice indeed to their servants when once they know them ; they say that they hate strangers about them, and so the new maid-servant is apt to think that she is not giving satisfaction, but time should be given on both sides for each to know whether they can work together in unity ; and in large houses we have noticed that we could never get on satisfactorily till we had gone over the house, thoroughly spring-cleaning it—and it took you nearly a year to plan your work so

that, if a housemaid, you would not give one girl more to do than the other. Some housekeepers who have never been a housemaid cannot plan the work for them, and so ought to leave it for the head housemaid to do herself, for unless you are once an undermaid you do not understand how long a time is needed to clean the many places, specially in the early morning.

Some girls are more fortunate than others in finding lost jewellery or small treasures, and we have found them months after in strange places and after there has been no end of turning up for them. Always look over old papers that may be given to you to burn, and specially if they have been used in packing, for we once found a valuable earring and bracelet. The earring had been long missing, and we had a pile of papers to burn and looked over them and found the earring ; we also found a silver waistband that had never been found although the house was well turned up. At last the post office was blamed, and months after, when the writer went to the situation, she did not care for so many boxes and papers in her pantry

for fear of fire ; so one day she started to clear away some of them and found the waistband. She told her lady's maid at once, and her ladyship sent word to the postmaster ; both were very glad it was found, for it was paid for, but, as we said, the post office got the blame. And another time a bracelet was missing, and the writer found it between two blankets in a bed that had not been properly shaken up and put tidy ; very likely the maids had been busy in another part of the house, perhaps among servants' rooms. And we think some cry out about their lost treasures, and hinder the housemaids, when it is their own memories that is to blame, and so send them to look in the wrong place. Visitors often stay too long in their bedrooms, and so blame the careless housemaid when the lost jewel is close at her own hand, and the housemaid has no freedom to look for it when she thinks it may be there.

We had another case of a gold watch that was lost on a Sunday morning. Many mistresses do not expect the rooms or work to be done the same on a Sunday ; but this lady lost her watch and it could not be found, so during

the day the thought came to one of the girls, could it be about the lady's bed, as we had not turned it up as we did other days. We stripped it and we found it tucked in safely at the foot of the bed ; it was not under bolster or pillow, but at the foot of the bed. We were almost called thieves that day, and all the harm we wished the visitor was that she might one day be a housemaid herself. She was not popular as a servant's friend and not like our lady, who would not have her bedroom fire on Saturday night to save us work on Sunday morning, and let us get out to church. We were not careless girls, for we had an excellent head housemaid who was there for years after we left, and whose memory is dear yet to the family. The writer has seen careless girls in more than one house, but they do not get a proper chance always to do their work, and in that case we are more likely to put the blame on the barrier—it is only right to do so.

We have noticed some visitors very rude to the servants and so different to our own employers, and we set a mark on them, for we would not go to serve them. We remember once when

our lady's brother was showing a visiting lady some old relics near the front door they came upon the head housemaid who was cleaning the church pew chairs (they were carried in while the church was being repaired), and she was near a very old grand piano. The lady asked in such a jeer, "And is this the housemaid's piano?" The gentleman looked very hard at the housemaid, for we were sure that he was very annoyed at her, but we did not hear his answer; but the housemaid had the good sense to keep quiet, but she could have told her to keep her jeers, for we were not her class of servant, neither was she our class of employer. We heard her character after, and never cared to see her. Some servants take great liberties, and then all are supposed to be alike; but we are glad that all ladies are not like this, for the world would be poor indeed; they would soon ruin all the girls—and no wonder her husband had left her. We heard of a gentleman who fancied his laundry-maid, so he called his servants together and told them that he was to marry her and bring her home as the lady of his house, and he hoped they would all

stay where they were ; but if they felt that they could not look upon her as their mistress and his wife, they were free to go away. And not one of them left, for they stayed on with them for years. This is a true story from one who knew them and could show us their London house. Now we have lived with superior servants, and we would much rather serve them even now in our old age than serve any lady who can never respect a servant.

There are times when it is difficult to replace one who has been long in a house, but in time one does turn up suitable, and just the same with the servants : she must change till she is suited again. We can mention here the story of a carnation that was given by an old lady to the gardener ; it was to be his own, but it had to be kept in the greenhouse, so that when the lady came she would see it. This was done, and it grew to be a most lovely double carnation, when it disappeared. There was near by a flower show, so it was taken there and won the first prize. The gardener was quite cool about the carnation, waiting to see if it might be brought back, and left his windows

open as usual. So after the show was over it did turn up, but was damaged. The gardener was vexed, but was a very quiet living man, so he said nothing ; but one day a carriage with three ladies called at the coachman's house asking if they might see the handsome carnations of his that had won the first prize at the show. There must have been a strange commotion and a lie was of no use, the truth had to be told so far. So the ladies came to see the damaged plant in its proper place, and of course they knew the gardener, but how could the coachman feel ; but he did not expect to see his name in the paper ; that was why the ladies knew about it. A case like this shows what one servant may do to another, but we do as a rule see all come to light, and we do admire the peaceful man who can patiently wait till it does come to light. No doubt we can tell other true stories much the same, but we will pass on to our next subject.

We would like to advise all young domestic servants to learn to write a letter properly to their superiors, for it is very easy and it means a very great deal to you, should you have to

write to the lady or gentleman in the housekeeper's absence. This has been seen by us, for once on returning from an holiday a girl had written to one of the gentlemen, and she did not even put Sir, Esq., or Mr., just the plain name that one would never see on any letter nowadays, and yet she was the girl who walked about dressed like a doll, and with a higher step than the ladies in the house ; but her pride had a fall afterward. We had never seen a letter so badly written, and the gentleman brought it to the housekeeper, for it was a surprise to him. A letter from us should always begin with " Madam " or " Sir," and certainly end with " Your obedient servant " ; and when you write to, say, an earl or countess, begin " My Lord " or " My Lady," and end with " I am, Your Lordship's " or " Your Ladyship's obedient servant " ; it is their due as our superiors, and it is so very easy for us to show respect. Never mind if you do not have " Miss " on your letter from them. The writer of this book never had " Miss " on one letter from her father ; it was not the custom in the early sixties ; the good old man said to

put "Miss" would spoil her pretty name. This did her no harm, and as she grew older she was Miss and Mrs. for thirty years, ever since 1876, when first she joined her Institution, and over twelve as housekeeper and cook housekeeper in a smaller house when she lost her left hand previous to that—so what about the employer that will have you with only one hand. Do you think they are a servant hater? We think not, and our love and gratitude to them will last as long as we live.

The losing of the use of the left hand was caused by blood poisoning, started in a neglected whitlow thumb. The hand was to be cut off at first; but the doctors in St. Bartholomew's, London, worked hard with the nurses and took from December, 1899, to July, 1900, to bring the hand to what it is. The memory of that hospital, with its doctors and nurses, and the then beloved Rector of St. Bartholomew's the Great, A. Barnet, and the employer, can never be too dear to the writer. Kindness came from every corner, and the servant treated like a princess; her situation kept open for months; but it was two years before she was strong to

do any work. No one could have any idea of all that was done in her case alone, and she never paid a penny, for her lady and gentleman did that for her. Of course Christmas Day was spent there and a large parcel on each patient's bed; there was a wool cross-over, warm petticoat, cuffs, etc., and something off the Christmas Tree in the evening, besides the visiting ladies with their flowers. If we were asleep they laid them on our pillow, and when they came back they never forgot to tell us that we were asleep last day they were in. A book could very easily be written to say what we saw there. No Insurance Act will ever give quarter what our employers have given in cases of illness, for we have never paid a doctor's bill in all the years in service, nor yet for a night's lodging. The loveliest singing we ever heard at St. Bartholomew's—the nurses and doctor-students on Christmas Eve—it was grand as we lay in bed listening in the casualty ward. Visiting days were very bright, and we saw the anxious relatives who spared no pains to do kindnesses that can never be repaid nor forgotten, and in stormy cold days, too. We

think of the children and parents, too, coming in with grapes which they had to take away, and the dear one who lost her life trying so hard to be the useful nurse. Memory sees yet the lovely flowers brought in and the story of the stolen purse and its giver ; the little paper boy, who said to the stranger in her trouble, " I'll pay your fare home, mam, if you have lost ticket, purse, and money too." All this and a lot more beside for the sake of the servant ; so don't be afraid to begin, and if you don't get on, try and try again.

A lot can be told about the Convalescent Home at Swanley, Kent. At that time a nurse was sent to and from London bringing patients with her, and we saw many cases far worse than the hand ; but few hands at that time had ever been cut so much, and so they were rather pleased with the case. We had the very best of food : jelly after we began to eat after our operations, and chicken, rabbit, boiled fish, milk puddings, port wine ; then by-and-by we could have mutton, etc., and the best roly-poly pudding we have ever tasted ; the raisins were often put in them and they had all brought

into the dining-room steaming hot. There was the trap-door, and the patients who were to leave the Home first were the men chosen to carry the large wooden tray along to the tables. The men were at one end, as their sitting-rooms were at that end of the Home, and the church was a little farther along, all inside. Then outside was their lawn and smoking-room, and not far from the nice convenient laundry where all the patients' clothes were nicely done up. The Home is a very long building, and so is very compact. The women patients were at the other end of the dining-room beside the trap-door, so we saw the men served first and so very easy and orderly. There had been about seventy of us as far as we can now remember; then came our turn all so quickly, and we stood up while the grace was said. It was all very orderly, and a sight to see the cripples, and some with heads and arms tied up. One young girl was awfully burned and recovering nicely; her accident happened at a children's party; some with breasts cut off; and we had a very funny old laundry-maid with a broken foot. She had

her crutches, but we did not care very much for her, for she was one to make us laugh at table ; she was lively, no doubt, but the very young girls were often scolded when it was her fault. We had a kind lady as matron, and we liked to see her at any time ; she came and told us one day at dinner-time of the relief of Ladysmith. We all stood up, of course, and there was a great commotion for a while. The laundry-maid was deaf, so she asked what was wrong. We told her, but she could not understand for a while ; at last she shouted out, “ Lady-smith, who is she ? ” This made all of us laugh till we saw the nurses cross, because they did not know what it all meant ; so we had to go to the surgery after dinner, and the writer apologized and told the head nurses, so of course we were all easily forgiven. We did have nice sitting-rooms—one large, and a smaller one to meet our doctor in, or to sit in if we did not feel so well—the grand piano and large sofas and chairs and all outside just as if it was a gentleman’s house. Now do we ever feel grateful for such places and do we ever think that they need money to keep them up ? We

had our walks out with the nurses, and when we were alone we had a certain limit ; but all was so delightful for poor invalids, and we had seats here and there all over the grounds. We also had concerts now and again outside ; people came and sang to us, and we had a blind organist who played in church every Saturday afternoon. We had our daily services and a sermon, and some of us so weak that we had to be wheeled into church, and we had very nice long sofas there, too. We were also able to have a little dance in our large sitting-room. Nurse played, while we were dressed in full evening dresses, all given by ladies.

Now, girls, we must not say any more ; that surely is enough to show what has been done for the domestic servants in illness ; alas ! can we look for all that from our new National Insurance Act ? we can never be better, we can assure you, than we have already been. We would like many to see for themselves a little of what we know, and we are sure that some of the people in the world would have less to say about those who very privately support

such places and get but little thanks ; they are good people, must be, and so we thank them heartily, and leave them to have their reward from the only good and Holy One who sees and knows them best. We have seen gratitude from young and old servants many a time, and no doubt there will be grateful girls again. We remember one stillroom maid that had a peculiar print dress many years ago, and so old-fashioned we called her " Joseph," a very bright nice girl ; so she went off in high glee one day for her sister's wedding. When the day came the bride died suddenly before the hour fixed. Our housekeeper had a wire and we were all so upset. The poor girl stayed for a few days, and when she came back we were all told not to speak of it, but let her mention it first. We showed our sympathy, but we found her very sad and quiet for a good while, and we can never forget the master's sympathy, for he was just as much upset as any one. We had no lady at that time. Of course we have often seen girls and been with them when the wire was handed into their hand, and we have also noticed the sad expression on the fellow-

servant's face, afraid to give it up in case it may be the bad news, and we have seen the master in tears, too, when his housemaid has suddenly lost her mother, and he has rung his bell for his butler and men-servants to look out the time-table to see if a train can be traced to take her off at once, so that she is not detained on the railway over Sunday.

Many of the writer's employers have left some of the sweetest memories that the world can show, and to write of them now is hard work, and we can remember the fellow-servants, too, for they would not leave you, not even to go to church, unless you would go with them. We have done this to please them, and have found it too much for us when the organ began, and so we had to go and go again to master the great sorrow, for we were not the only ones who had to give up parents and home, and we thank God now that they are away and so not in grief with our awful times.

Nothing brings master and servant closer together than the sudden sore bereavement, and very likely this book could not be written so sad were it not for the many sad days that

has been spent in service, and now so very few of the employers are to be seen ; and when they are with us we feel that we are still respected by them, for there is the usual welcome—for they would look back the same as we do on days that are gone by. In our young days the curtsy was fashionable ; you would see every man's daughter bobbing whenever they met the lady or gentleman or when they met their teacher. The custom is gone now, and we wonder why ; but the days are changed, and some call it education that is so far doing this ; it cannot be education, for we do look for more respect from the educated than from the class that we called the ignorant. We have often felt inclined to say that some are too proud, so are surrounded by at least two very bad faults, and one is selfish conceit and bad temper. The three are never separated, for we can see it if we humbly look at ourselves—of course some may not try to master their faults—and it does not suit them to be told of their faults ; they will turn round and tell you that they are as good as their superiors, and they will do as they like and wear what

they like, and if the old housekeeper is not pleased she may get some one else. Now, good girls will never speak to a housekeeper like that if they want to get on, for they generally take good advice, and are too wise for their own sakes. Some girls may be far better than their superiors, we know, but that will never make us better than them if we have the self-conceit. The best girls are humble and keep their positions as the servant, and we have seen such have far more honour in the end than the one who is better in her own eyes, and so wants to show off with her dress and empty purse. We remember the man-servant who went out dressed off as if he was a doll, and that lad would have been in debt to every girl in the house if he could, but he had to be brought down as every vain person has to be, for we see for ourselves that pride does go before destruction, and the haughty spirit before the fall. We are poor enough in every station or in any station if we have not the Grace of God to keep us and guide us along in this evil world.

Some servants are very high-minded, and think that they have seen more than any one

else. Once a footman was three months in London, and when he came back he began to show off and tell what he had seen ; he was out on the carriage every afternoon and certainly he had seen a very great deal, but we could not believe that he had seen more than the servant who had been twenty years in England, and nine of that time in London—and in a busy part of London. Some see more than you have seen if they are not quarter your age. Now, girls, avoid all such nonsense, and fill your thoughts with something more lasting ; your work if well done every day, that is if you are in a large house—your work will help you to go away from such vain fancies, and if you study to be good and kind to one another we feel sure that you will find plenty to do. We enjoyed our situations in Hampshire, Somersetshire, Norfolk, and Ipswich, and if it is many years back still we can speak of the nice changes we had. One was different to the other, but at one the English and Scotch girls were happy with a poor French girl and enjoyed going out with her. There were many afternoons spent gathering bramble berries for the

housekeeper, and if we filled her large basket we were sure to have a good tea, for the family were fond of the jam or jelly, and so we worked well in the morning to get out if fine in the afternoon.

We were in one house where the servants' table-knives were marked with "Stolen from" and the name of the house. Each servant took away their knife and fork and glass and kept them after they were cleaned till the next meal. The beer was made at home and the beer pipe laid along the servants' hall on the floor, and a very neat barrel and tap shining bright could be run on our hall table on wheels, so that each servant could help themselves. Beer was more plentiful than it has been of late years; we had a glass each at eleven, one at 1 p.m. for dinner, one at 7 p.m., and one at 9 p.m. You could drink it or carry it away, and if we cared we could put it in a bottle and give it to an outside fellow-servant, as they often obliged us by going a message. The beer was better in bygone days than it has been for twenty years past or more; we can't tell why.

We do not advise girls to go into a large

house when they begin domestic service, but it all depends on her age and what she has learned at home. A young girl of fifteen once went into a large house from a farm kitchen ; she was to be third housemaid. No one expected her to manage, as she had no idea of her work ; but she was a nice good girl. She had a short time in the house before the family arrived, and during that time it was marvellous how well she got on. She knew the head housemaid, and so watched what she could do to help her. Every one was surprised to see one so young get on so well ; but she tried and soon learned to do her part well ; and once girls can do the servants' rooms well we may be sure they will soon be of use to us. We should learn them to do the same for the servants' rooms as we do for the family—by turning down their beds at night and making them nice and tidy, and should the servants be very untidy to let the head housemaid see the grievance and not begin to dictate to them yourself, for that is a great mistake ; it sometimes ends in quarrelling. This can be done if the head housemaid is firm and yet kind, and must have

her orders obeyed, and can be put right without running to the housekeeper ; but if you must go to her, then do so, and never let the house go wrong if you see that matters are daily getting worse. Many a struggle a good head housemaid has had with untidy rude men-servants. We know once when a gentleman wanted to go round to see the men's bedrooms before he went away to London ; they were to be done up, so he asked if he might see them now and so called his head housemaid. As the housekeeper went to London and she was left in charge, they went over the rooms, and the gentleman looked at her and said, " But they are very untidy ; is this how they leave their clothes ? You must speak to them about this, or I will do it for you." The housemaid took their part and said why they had left their room and that she had never seen it so bad, but they would soon be in and would clear all up for themselves ; and so they did, in case the master might look up again. And in this same room, after all had gone to London, the housemaid once found five or six of the library books in a cupboard with the front

leaf and crest torn out, ready to be packed but forgotten. What could she do, as the leaves were gone and so could not be laid into the book again? The books were put back into the library and no one ever asked for them. It's not so easy to be the housemaid left in charge either, for she has to look round, specially if she is a trusted old servant, and servants should never touch the books unless they have leave; but we have seen the master taking a book to his men-servants should they be laid up. We fear one may be out in the battlefield now who was laid up for weeks with a bad throat not so many years ago. The kind master had him taken into the house from the stables and asked the housekeeper to look well after him and see that he had every attention, and see that the doctor's orders were carried out, and all the servants were kind to him.

Poor lad, where is he to-day? We wonder; and we are sure that many of our chauffeurs and soldier valets think often of the comforts they had with us, if they are alive. One feels almost afraid to write and ask for them—the world is very full of sorrow, and will be so long

as it is so full of sin and hard-heartedness ; it takes a lot to melt the hard human heart, and we must confess that even yet, in all our grief, we are very rebellious. We think we are hard done by and look for the honour that is due to our Creator. We can see this, that man must be first, and he will hurry on and take great trouble and pains to rush in before his neighbour and before his Maker if he dare. The world must bend and fall prostrate yet, and when will that be ?

We would like to see what we saw once in Scotland, in Berwickshire, about the year 1868, when many were brought very low ; it was a sight we have never forgotten, and we often wonder if any one is alive in Eyemouth to speak of it. We would be glad to see that great awakening all over the land. The writer was then a general servant for a short time in the Free Church manse, and so was often in touch with some of the people who would neither work nor sleep. The streets were full and churches crowded every day, and nearly all night as well. Many of the clergy had to come from Edinburgh to assist, and until the world can

see its careless, heedless ways we will never be what we ought to be, for God is dishonoured every day, and by the educated and unlearned alike, and His holy day of rest abused for our selfish pleasures—we need not wonder at misfortunes.

We like to speak of our lady in Norfolk who took a warm interest in us all. “Unity is strength”; and how she did keep the motto herself, and after some years there, we found her dead in bed one morning. This was another very sore trial to us—and a very large funeral which the servants would always remember. The family went abroad and left us all alone, and we have often thought of the young housemaid who had leave to have a sister with her. Both were very musical and asked if they might play the grand piano; of course they were refused, and when Sunday came they were to be in the house—nearly all the servants were going to church and only kitchen-maids at home. Church was near. The upper servants were wise to lock up the public rooms, for these girls stayed in to have a play in spite of them. Nothing was said till Monday

when the under girl asked why the rooms had been locked up from her ; what she had done ? Just think of her and her mistress only but laid in the grave. Her rude ways to us afterwards was shocking. We tried to speak to her, but she told us that she had done it in other houses and there was no harm, and she would not listen. By-and-by, when all went back to London, we heard that she had to be discharged for stealing butter, etc., from the servants' hall ; so you see how good places are taken advantage of. We have had trouble with others in the same way ; they could almost kill you if you refuse to let them have the run of the house, and they will even watch you when you go out and go prying all over the house and, if they can, into places where you do not even go yourself.

We do, as a rule, dislike to have inquisitive people beside us, and another case happened one Sunday morning with the head housemaid some months before who was hurrying to get to church. She had three bonnets, but two were out of order. Where was the third ? She hunted for it, but could not find it till an under

girl came and very soon told her, and it was in a private place. The same girl also wanted a registered envelope ; she was told that she had not got one. She did not think. “ Oh, yes, you have, in that top drawer.” She went and they found it ; but how unpleasant a thing ! It went on for a short time till some of the men’s letters were read and repeated, but the footman soon put a stop to it all, for she could scarcely live with the servants after every one who came in were told to watch her, and so a girl like that can never get on. You cannot give her a character, for you must tell the truth about every one you recommend, and girls like that will blame her employers or her housekeeper if she is kept out of a place, and the gossiping story is sure to be believed by some one.

We remember yet another annoyance that we had in service. The housekeeper was not very straight, and so we left a very good situation and very soon got into another one. The world sang the master’s praises ; he was such a good gentleman. The new servant met him in the morning, and he asked ever so many

questions ; this hardly pleased the new housemaid, but by-and-by the gentleman began to speak very disrespectfully of her last place and of her employers. This touched a sore place, and so of course she must speak out. She heard what he had to say, and then begging his pardon began to contradict all he had said. High words came from both, as the housemaid was determined to battle it out. He told her that she need not do so for he knew for a fact, and said, " I know, for I had a scullery-maid from them and she told me." The housemaid said, " And what does a scullery-maid know of what may be going on upstairs ? not so much surely as the head housemaid " ; and she still held up her late employers and said that the girl may have been told lies or had made up a few. We spoke of her as we should have done, and thought very little of her, and certainly far less of the gentleman who gave way to the gossip, for no one cared to serve him after that. The other servants heard the words and saw the new housemaid upset, and later on the gentleman had to own to the servant that he was wrong. And we are only very surprised

that a man in his position should question servants as he did. We tried to get the scullery-maid's name by asking, but we never got it, and the other servants did not know ; but we were annoyed for weeks at what caused so many words, but we were wild enough to report it. Servants do often repeat what they see and hear, but it brings disgrace to them in the end ; and how do we like it if we are watched and cannot move without some one interfering, and in the underhanded way. Fancy a servant after she has her character and her situation, and she can ridicule her mistress so openly—surely there are few such cases. We never could feel happy there, so made the change when we got a chance, but we were inclined to think that the upset with the housemaid had been a lesson. We hope it was.

We have been in places where we prepared for Royalty, but they did not arrive in our day ; and once the writer was almost engaged to Marlborough House. It was then she took the step into the den already mentioned, and gave the cabman a sovereign for a shilling, and then was almost eaten alive with bugs—the

pest she had never seen before. The writer was told before leaving Scotland that she would find London streets paved with gold, but it does young people good to move about and see the world and different ways, and she never regretted going south ; for now there is the happy memories, and many old servants must think of those they have lived with, for it is not one or two but many that you meet in large houses, and we do not think of counting them ; and during this war we think of so many of them and daily wonder where they can be. We also know the wounded officer ; he is sure to have the servants' sympathy ; and we mourn the sad loss of many of our country proprietors. Alas, we say, for many a poor working man will miss them for years to come, and that is best known to the employee who has been on the grounds for many years. The outsider has very little idea of it, and we hope that the employee's family may be favoured by the surviving relatives and may have places opened for them when old enough to fill them. We are interested in all their little children and would wish them every success whatever

they may follow after. Outside servants must also have a part of our respect, for they are very often at our side, and indeed we watch for the gardener, house carpenter, gamekeeper, and many others that we expect to see almost daily.

One of our prettiest sights is the gardener in the early morning renewing his plants ; he has come in with many a young man who has stolen one of our good girls from us ; and some of our happiest memories is when in England we would have our certain place on the wall side where we were free to have our share of strawberries. The gardener was told to arrange this ; he was a fine old Englishman and highly respected. We remember on one Sunday morning some of the girls had gone somewhere in the centre of the garden and saw the best strawberries, and so must have one or two, and the gardener had traps set for rats, and the great wonder was that their hands were not caught ; but they were young and we saw that they were annoyed after that their greed was found out. We had all that it was possible for any gardener to spare, and they were in disgrace

for a good while ; but it is just like many in the world : you may do and give, but they often take advantage. We see this everywhere. We only remember one very disagreeable gardener in all our years in service and he left his situation in disgrace.

The gardener has a good many lovely plants all over the large house, and each one must be watched with care, and we have also many happy memories of his daily visit to see what fruit is needed for dessert, and also his kind help when fruit is ready for preserving, and his daily advice about vegetables, etc. ; for he must arrange for them to be brought in good, and yet try to make them last the certain time. So we are sure that the gardener is a busy man, whether in his kitchen gardens or in his flower gardens, and often has very heavy work. We have watched the young men grow up and marry fellow-servants, and some head gardeners in very good situations. We have heard people say, " So-and-so is married, but she has only married a gardener," as if he was a nobody, and we would smile at their ignorance even if we feel angry at the remark. There

has to be a good many years' hard work and study gone through before you can be the good head gardener, and a lady once asked the writer in London, when told that her father was a gardener, " Why is the Scotch gardener the best gardener ? " but she could not answer the question, and can never meet with any one who could tell her.

We have never seen nicer apples in any garden than in the flower garden at the granite mansion at home ; there was the very green scented apple as well as the pippin, and we have seen the young people climbing the high walls to get at them, or trying to break into the fruit-room to help themselves. We think it strange now as we look back, and we wonder at servants, etc., who have plenty and yet are never pleased should they have all and the best of all, and the rich man's goods are so often coveted, and there are some who even wish you away to get your belongings. We have seen this over and over again, and we may and ought to pray that we may have grace given to us to keep us from such a cruel desire, and try to be content in the station that it has

pleased God to place us in. Agar's prayer is surely known by us all, and too much of the world may only be abused by us if we get it ; we are so apt to think that if we had more and yet more that we would feed the hungry ; but the Book of books gives us our character, and we must not, for we cannot, deny it. Had we the rich man's store to-day we would do no more than he does ; for they are not all generous, neither are they all selfish and greedy ; they have the responsibility, but we have ours, too, and servants have seen many a good turn done that outsiders know nothing about.

We have spoken of one dear old generous lady already in this small book, and she died with very little over, for she left us all a year's wages and gave and gave from her own hand, and we had her lady companion who was very generous. Poor people were helped by her and her two sisters, and many an apron, cap, boots, and old but good clothes were given to the servants. The housemaid who waited upon her had something nearly every day, and had books, ornaments, etc., till she could not carry them about and had to give some to deserving

cases or to some useful purpose. The same lady would ring the front door bell twice to have the housemaid at the door to meet her, and so not hinder a man-servant if he was busy ; and then she had the help which she also needed when she got in, for she, too, was old, and she was sorry indeed when her ladyship died and all had to be broken up. The servant who has waited on ladies the same as this housemaid has done does not thank the world for the remarks that she may now hear, and we wonder that inexperienced people should try to hurt the feelings by saying what we have to hear, for the old servant will ever cling to the domestic side, no matter what comes ; and when she meets with her class she will often ask if they were happy in service, and no one yet has said that they would not go back, only they would go back if they could take their old man with them.

Domestic service now must be so far changed for a time, and more so when the master and all his men-servants are serving their King and Country. All will gladly come home if spared to come, and places will be nearly all open if it is in the employer's power at all, for they

will keep the promise given at the outbreak. Servants at home can now show what they are, and do their part at home for master or for fellow-servants or for their wives and children, and there will also be the widows and the children. We were brought in contact with many widows and their children after the South African War, but we will find many more poor sad homes after this war, and very many sad young girls, too, who have lost the one chosen by them. We feel for them, and if they can they should enter service, for the girls would cheer each other ; and if they are busy, they are far better at cleaning or cooking, also laundry work, than they would be at their needle, quietly sitting brooding over the loss. Servants do gather in groups and like to go out together, at least they used to go out threes and fours all neatly dressed, for they dare not go otherwise. Plain clothes, and yet good, look best, and the less jewellery the better, for the girl is very vulgar if she wears jewellery and has not everything in keeping with it, and the servant looks neat in as little as possible. Sometimes her lady will give her something,

as the writer has had some given her, and can be seen at times with the large old-fashioned brooch, wearing it in memory of a dear young lady, and also wearing one at times with her deceased lady's lovely grey hair in it, having had the money given to her by request whenever her mistress died.

Now, girls, no lady will ever object to you wearing the locket with your father or mother inside. Many years ago a housemaid had been out and hurried upstairs to see to her work ; she put on her cap, as was her usual custom, but she forgot to take off her mourning locket. She met her kind young mistress, who noticed the locket and stopped her and said, " Oh, what a lovely locket ! have you any one inside ? " The lady was very pleased to see the housemaid's parents inside, and she said she had forgotten to take it off, as she never cared to wear it in the house ; but the lady said that she must wear it, she liked to think of her good father and mother, for they had served her parents years back, and their memory was dear to her as well, so she must wear it. But the housemaid was never one to wear a lot of

jewellery nor finery ; it does not do at all in a large establishment, and so she never was once told of her dress that she can remember, and now she has no wish to show off what she has ; but it all has a history like other people's, and so she wants to keep it, for she may wear it now and again when she chooses.

We have been at several nice weddings of fellow-servants in our day, and at some when the wedding breakfast was in the servants' hall—so a jolly party indeed. Servants' parties are always good if given by the employer and not the underhanded party got up by a few and the under-servants cannot be told if the lady has knowledge of it or not. How much better when the housekeeper or butler asks for the treat for every one, and so has the full leave to go on, and we did prefer the lady or the gentleman to come downstairs to see our supper table, and see us when we were all assembled, so that they could see all present. Nothing in service is more appreciated by us than to hear the short speech to us from the master or mistress we love to serve, and we now look back on the many happy evenings spent, and with

every freedom, because they were in the house and we had the feeling that all was going on right. We can never understand how servants can ever have a party and use the drawing-room and its china, and dance on the polished floor, and use the piano, etc., as ladies have told us they did ; we can never imagine how any one can have the impudence or dare to do such a thing. We have never seen this done, although bad enough in one place where we were not told whether our mistress gave leave or not ; and when we asked the housekeeper we had no answer, so we left after a time.

How well off the servants are in these years of war, for they have no rent to worry about and no anxiety about their coal bill, nor how food, etc., is to be got in and paid for, no taxes nor cares like so many poor working men ; they are also sure of their wages when quarter day comes round. It is true she may have a widow mother who requires some help with rent, coals, or food, but there are many who ought to value a good situation, whether in the small comfortable house as general or in larger good situations where a few servants are,

for we have seen them all and know what they have been like, and so we say that all as a rule ought to be very thankful that they are the domestic servant and so study to show gratitude by good deeds to all around, as there is work just now for every one to do. Oh, that we could learn to forget our evil works and be active in good work for the sake of our countrymen and their homes ; nearly every woman who can has done her good share of knitting and sewing, and much has been given in pennies and parcels sent off to dear ones at the front, and many a sleepless mother and sweetheart has shed the sad tear for the lonely one so comfortless and in danger as well.

We would now like to tell the story of the smoking lamp. Once a lamp was said to be put out by the master and footmen, and yet both were deceived, although both quite sure ; and in the early morning the housemaid was very alarmed to find the library in a shocking state. Strings of soot were hanging from the ceiling all over the room ; everything was thick with greasy soot ; but she opened her shutters and did no more till she could tell the housekeeper.

Then the cry came, "What can we do?" Luckily all was well outside; we had days of dry weather, and we opened the nice large windows as if they were doors and cleared all out on the lovely green grass. The housekeeper asked the housemaid to get water and prepare to wash the carpet. The woman was amazed, and so refused, and she would have it done, asking her at the same time what she would do. The woman with experience asked if men would lift it out flat and throw it on its face; it could be cleaned in that way, and in no other way, for to wash it was quite impossible. But this the housekeeper jeered at, but just then she was called away with the gentleman, and lucky for us that she was, for the outside men, seeing better than the housekeeper, at once set to work and took out all tacks and carefully lifted it outside and threw it on its face on the nice green grass. And we will never forget their faces; they soon saw the soot thick on the grass and they set to work to give it a good drag. The carpet was a lovely dark grey, with a very deep pile, and always showed a footmark, and was very large

and valuable too, so we were glad to be so fortunate with it. But by this time out came the gentleman and the housekeeper raving at us, for we had ruined the carpet. The workmen showed them the sooty grass and then the carpet, which was nearly cleaned, and after their bluster was over they saw that it was best managed without them ; so they left it more for the head housemaid after ; but, oh dear, the lovely books were in such a state, and we were a fortnight and more before we could get the room finished, for we used brushes and could not use the clean duster for a long time. We hope some girls may notice this story, for it was difficult to know what to do for the best.

What is our head and experienced housemaid wanted for at all if in such cases her advice is ignored. Our housekeeper was a widow, and never did any work at all, only walk about with her stick ; she had never been a housemaid or a servant, or she must have seen as others did, and we do appreciate the outside men who are ever ready to help us in some of the mishaps we have ; for as a rule they quickly

see what you want and are willing and obliging. We were indebted to them for the clean carpet, which we were all very pleased to see right again ; and we were glad we had only the one gentleman, a relative, in the large house at the time.

We will tell another story about another very good large carpet, but it was a pale blue new brussel. The lady spilled ink on it and rang her bell at once for her head housemaid ; she begged her lady's pardon, but would not wash it, as she wished her to do, trying to tell her mistress how she could take it out, adding that washing would only make it worse. Her lady, who was a very nice lady, got very angry and wanted it washed, and yet the housemaid begged her pardon and refused to do it. A week nearly passed by, and the lady went to London for the day—just what her housemaid wanted ; and she set to work very earnestly alone and yet in fear, in case she might fail to get out the ink, for it was dried in by this time, but she got a lemon and some sweet milk and laid on the milk to soften it, cut her lemon in two, and began to raise up the ink. She saw

it move and the blue carpet appear, and was very excited, as it had to be quickly done, and the lemon drove the milk which had the ink with it till all was on a plate and the carpet clean as before. The housemaid was as pleased as if the carpet had been her own, and it was a success. The lady returned and no ink could be seen, not even the place where it was, and she asked what had done it and when told could not believe it ; and she was sorry she did not see it done ; but the housemaid was excited enough without her. It is not a bad plan to give your old housemaid her own way ; we have often seen her way is the best.

This book is sure to be very dry reading to many, although to those who know the writer many will read it with interest, for they have seen service like it themselves. We are sure it will interest the old servant, and she will read it in her retirement if the print is not made too small, and we hope our young girls will shun all that is amiss and practise all the good advice. We could speak to them a good while longer, for youth needs help every day and in every station. Always learn to knock

at servants' bedroom doors, that is easily learned and you will never make the careless mistake when you have to go upstairs to your superior's private rooms. Remember that every employer has a right to know if you are honest. Do not take offence if many questions are asked about you ; always tell the truth about your age and how long you were in your last place, as the housekeeper is sure to put the truth in your reference. Do not say you were cook in a certain house, as the girl did who was stillroom maid and so lost her place. Never say you are well and strong if you are delicate ; speak out the truth.

Will young girls notice, when dusting tables where there are private papers, that it is far better to leave the table than to touch the papers ; they may be in a smoking-room, billiard-room, or front hall. Gentlemen prefer their papers left alone. Some old housemaids have been highly spoken of as never touching papers ; they have a way of laying down their left arm full length on the papers if they must dust and brush it, carefully leaving all papers in the same place, not lifting one of them ; but

you are safest to leave them as they are, and we hope you never pry into places where you have no right to be and never carry tales outside. You will then have the peaceful life, and in the end a peaceful reward. You may have a good husband and a good home of your own, for many servants take a large house together, and we knew a very nice butler who married a lady's-maid and both had money in the Building Society—and got a nice house; he was butler and his wife was cook-housekeeper; they had their own servants and we called to see them when they had good families with them who travelled about and so preferred their house instead of an hotel. There are many servants owners of houses and property, very well off, and we have seen servants' families rise into good positions, far better than some of our great people who can only look on us with disdain, for we are only a servant.

We think that this may be the first book on Domestic Service written by an old servant, and if it is we must ask readers to be blind to the bad grammar. We would wish that we had started this book sooner and so could

publish it a year ago ; but we need not say a word when time passes quickly ; that means that we have not been idle even if people say that you have nothing to do. No doubt the thoughts have been busy, at any rate.

Do not be annoyed if you see your employers going round the house or into your rooms, for they can go surely if they choose to, or are suspicious of any of the servants. We once had a lady who went round our rooms when we were at dinner ; it was supposed to be that she wanted to see if the rooms were kept clean ; but we have had the lady who told us when she was coming, and we did honour her, for we were sure that she had by far the greatest regard and confidence in her servants ; and true enough, we liked to serve her best. We had the lady who locked up all her private cabinets and left the keys in the house, so it was plain to be seen that she trusted us and we were very pleased to serve her and obey her orders. We honour our last employers, and look back on the days when we felt that we could serve them without wages ; there was the decided order given and we had peace to attend to our

duties ; and now we think of them often in all their sorrows, as the officers are often in our thoughts, and they know that we can remember them in our prayers too.

Now some may say that it is easy to write a book like this, but it is not easy to go over the situations and recall the many happy memories, sad memories, in connexion with employers and servants. We have the lady who said she would not part with us unless we left her for a home of our own, and we had to follow her to the grave and stand by while the choirboys sang, " Now the labourer's task is o'er." We had not heard that hymn before, for it is thirty years ago, and we were struck at the sweet singing at the grave, for all were in tears. This book has not all the sad memories, although it has a good many, and this family will ever be very dear to us, for our mistress made her daughters look upon us as friends, and there was so many of us servants. We remember when they came to the country house the young ladies would bring special pieces of music, " Wm. Hill's March " or " The Four Maries," with other pieces to play to the housemaids in the

forenoon ; so the drawing-room door had to stand open, so that we might hear when we were busy at our work. We did enjoy the music and appreciate their thoughtfulness.

The old servant is often called fussy and bad-tempered ; it is very possible, but we will give some instances why she is so. We have arranged every week who may likely be the ones to attend church on Sunday, as nearly all employers make it a rule, and we have kept that rule. One is to be at home for upstairs and so can finish up and let the others be in good time ; she often has a good bit to do, but her special work in summer is to see to all the windows should it rain, or attend to sun blinds inside, so that the curtains, etc., are shaded from the burning sun. The head housemaid warns the girl to be sure and notice blinds, but often she has been furious whenever she came in sight of the house ; every blind is up on the sunny side, and so she speaks of it at once. And yet she is the fussy or grumpy old thing if she says a word, and so the curtains, chairs, and carpets may be very much the worse of the hour's sunshine ; and it is her

fault she was out, and some girls can neglect this and coolly tell you that they forgot, or run to pull them down when they see you coming in. How very often this may happen in large houses, for one young girl will see another and stand and talk till they begin to think that they are all behind, then the rush comes ; and so something is sure to be forgotten, and some girls are annoyed at themselves, yet they will not move to say they are sorry if any harm is done.

We will give another instance, for we have seen some very bad behaviour in the servants' hall with season servants, and it is hard work to check it. The head housemaid or head laundry-maid are expected to keep order ; the latter is not always there ; duty prevents her often, so the weight is sure to fall on the housemaid if she is an old servant. Some may listen, while others must have plenty of fun, and so forget themselves, youth like ; but they forget where they are, and at this time we would often see bread thrown all over the place. She tries and tries again, and so it goes on till one day a piece about a quarter of a pound is thrown,

and loud laughter, and all eyes on the housemaid, who went and picked it up and said, "Now mind, this is the last piece of bread that you can throw; the very next piece goes up to the drawing-room, regardless of what happens after, for many in this parish have not enough to eat"; and with tears she told them all to please themselves, only that was what she would do. The habit stopped that very day, but we cannot tell what stopped it; we believe it was the tears, for it was the girl's own parish and she was the more likely to know of poor people, and we have never seen a habit stopped so quietly and so quickly as that was, and no rude remarks ever brought up after. It is not easy to be a head housemaid; you have too many people to please, and you are well off if you have three or four nice girls under you if they try to help you. There are times when visitors are calling to see the house—we have had many such when we had a picture gallery, and very long corridors; and once in England we had hard work after to put rooms tidy, specially if the days were wet, but it was our lady's and gentleman's wish, and we just

had to remember the days. The house was very long and narrow but not high. They were good to their servants and we were very happy as a rule. We had our hard days and we had easy days sometimes, of course, as in all stations. We had our daily worries, but we were very healthy, and our afternoon walks ; these were enjoyed if we only could get out a while ; but we often were all cleaning the whole day, for it was so large and our own employers very little at home.

Many years ago we can remember the coachman's jeer, " Do you expect a pension when you retire, that you are always at work ? " And we did not have the ready answer that we might have now. It is not what we expect, it is what we get, and we want to meet that lad again and answer it now that we have retired. No doubt he would have a surprise for his jeer. Servants are heard saying that they are very fond of So-and-so, and yet they are slow to show their love if anything in the house goes wrong. It is not their work to put it right, so where is their love if they are the man-servant and more able to put a thing right.

We remember, when the carpet-sweeper first came out, our kind lady got one, as the house had many of the Brussels carpets and she thought it would be such a boon, but to her great surprise the head housemaid and girls did not like it and it went out of order too soon, and so was of no use. The lady was not at all pleased at this and called her head housemaid the most conservative woman she had ever seen. By-and-by the housemaid one day, being angry at the new thing, gave it a sudden shake, and thought she had broken it; but no, she had turned out the brush, and now she could see how it had to be kept clean—a grand discovery—and how glad all were to have a lesson, for the brush had to come out and the screw at each end kept in proper order, and very soon the girls knew how to work the new carpet-sweeper. And of course our good lady was amused to see it in constant use and asked, “Why we were using it now and so constant?” The housemaid told her all and added that they could not like a thing if they did not understand it—but now what a help it will be to them. That good lady has darned a bare place in a

table napkin or towel many a time to help her housemaids in the busy season, and many old though good clothes have been given to her servants which lasted a long time.

We old servants are surprised to see white blouses and coloured skirts worn by scullery-maids instead of the plain cotton dress ; surely this is extravagant and not near so suitable as her work is so hard and also very greasy. Once while in London the writer was surprised if she saw a girl at any time in a large house without her cap, and would remark that it was a pity that the young girl should be a charwoman already when she might be the house servant. We wonder that they do not see this, but they may some day, and we think that they do not listen to advice now as they did in our young days ; one thing we do know, that if they were to go out dressed in anything now they would be allowed by parents or employers to wear what they like, there is no command over them, they must dictate and command the older and people of experience, and we cannot say that this is wise of parents or employers either, for the young can never learn if they are losing so

much time, running loose week after week on the roads. We hope that by-and-by the ways may change and find people more careful. We do not write that all servants are extravagant, but we see many who are careless and wasteful, and may miss the only time they have for saving if they will not see the go-ahead time with its many temptations ; we have seen only too many who would be wise after it is too late.

When some girls go to see the lady where the place is open she does sometimes go with a heavy heart. She hears that the situation is good and so she is afraid she may not get it. She sees the lady and she likes her appearance, she is a good-looking nice girl, and she sees the housekeeper and gives her opinion, but the housekeeper wants to know if she can work, good looks are of no use if in her character you are told that she is a very rude forward girl, and many other faults ; but the lady has fancied her and decides to have her in. All goes on well for a few weeks, but alas ! for her good looks ; they do not find her work done and the lady sees her very untidy, so a change must be made after all ; and any one likes to see the

tall fine girl as the domestic servant if pleasant and willing as we have seen them many a time ; but do not despise the shorter maid, for some of the short girls are excellent in the scullery. We know some who could put many an older servant to shame, for they were always neat and tidy, pleasant, and quiet workers.

A great deal more could easily be written, and we hope some old servant may also speak out in favour of Domestic Service, and so let it be again what it has been, and when both will look on each other as they ought, for there has always been master and servant, and we have the number of servants, or near the number, given here by one who knows, 1,330,783 female domestic servants at the last census in 1911, and so the Domestic Service is the largest single industry that is ; there are more people employed as domestic servants than any other class of employment. Before closing this book the writer would ask that a kinder interest may be taken in girls who may have at one time been in disgrace ; many of them have no homes and we might try to help them into situations. This appeal is from the old housekeeper and

so from one who has had many a talk with young girls for their good ; but they have often been led far astray. We ought to give them the chance again, by trying to get them situations, and if the lady is not her friend nor the housekeeper, we pity her.

As a rule we have seen domestic servants very loyal and would put themselves about if they saw any chance of seeing our King or Queen and other members of the Royal Family, and know them often before any one else in a crowd. We have also seen the servant very devoted to her minister and also to her doctor, and would speak of them the minute she came in if she happened to meet them, and we can look back with love and affection on some of their visits to us, and the afternoons spent with congregations at the parish rectory and manse, when we were made so happy by our clergyman and his wife, and even their children would introduce themselves to the servant by presenting her with a rose or some other pretty flower. We must not forget to mention that we cannot give one instance of any of our situations keeping us short of food, and if we were

short at any time it was not a wilful mistake of our fellow-servants in the kitchen, and so we could soon be put right by going to the first kitchenmaid, who always knows what we are to have. And will we remind the servants to report all breakages at once, for it saves a very great deal of unpleasantness, and we know that every one has an accident now and again and it is very mean to hide it and say nothing, even if you may be too annoyed to speak of it, and by telling it out you are far happier. We wish success and every blessing for master and servant in the future.

Your obedient servant,

M. S.

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